

SEP 16 1999

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September 15, 1999

CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
Lester Snow  
1416 Ninth St., #1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lester,

I am Steve Mello, a Delta farmer and resident of Tyler Island (Reclamation District No. 563 (RD563) in Sacramento County.

I am a North Delta Water Agency representative on the Delta Protection Commission. A director on the Central Valley Flood Control Association. A Trustee of RD563, and a founding board member of the North Delta Conservancy which is non-profit land trust in Sacramento County.

I support the Cal-Fed preferred alternative, but have many concerns about how the Cal Fed Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) and the whole Cal-Fed process are carried out.

The negative socio - economic impacts in the Delta have been said by Cal-Fed to be unavoidable and permanent.

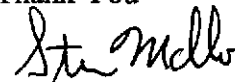
I have some ideas on how those affects can be minimized.

1. A common Delta pool needs to be maintained in order to guarantee sufficient quantities of good quality water in the Delta for in the Delta uses for agricultural municipal and environmental needs.
2. There needs to be some type of safe harbor protection for farmland affected by the induced introduction of special status species by the ERPP. The cost of pump and siphon screening as well as other costs related to these species should not be born landowners in the Delta.
3. Scientist indicate that 150% to 175% of the quantity of water currently being used by farming the Delta land will be lost to the evapotranspiration of wetlands being proposed in the ERPP and from water surfaces of transport facilities. In a water deficit state, where is that water going to come from?

4. There needs to be more storage, both on - stream and off - stream. Off - stream storage south of the State and Federal pumps is critical, as fisheries recovery will not occur until pumping if ceased during periods of critical environmental need in the Delta.
5. I am very concerned about the fact that State and Federal agencies that are signatories to and participants in Cal-Fed are carrying out projects that accomplish Cal-Fed goals while by passing the proper public review that is required of Cal-Fed. Individual counties Habitat Conservation Plans, State and Federal Agencies plans and Cal-Fed plans need to be better coordinated.
6. No predetermined time line should lead to the construction of an Isolated Water Conveyance Facility. How ever much time is necessary to implement, evaluate and adjust all possible alternatives, including on and off stream storage that allow for through Delta transfer of water to the pumps and maintain a Common Delta Pool.
7. Subject all constructed facilities used to transfer water south to the same level of scrutiny as Delta levees in regards to risk to seismic activity, water supply reliability and system integrity.
8. Base all Cal-Fed actions on science, not supposition. A case in point is dredging on the North and South forks of the Mokulumne River. Dredging would help pass flood flows safely through the Delta while more efficiently moving water to the State and Federal pumps. The opponents of dredging say the channel sediments are so contaminated as to preclude that option. The fact is that the Department of Water Resources as part of its North Delta Program Plan did extensive sampling on both forks of the Mokulumne and found the sediments to be clean. As part of the permit process for a 90,000 cubic yard dredge project that was done by RD563 in 1997 and a new dredge project set for completion in the year 2000, sediment sampling was done that established that the sediment sampled actually met drinking water quality standards! This sampling was done in accordance with regulations by the Sacramento Regional Water Quality Control Board and was approved by that board.

My parents worked a lifetime to create a legacy to pass on to their children and subsequent generations. Let us make sure that a bureaucracy does not make that hard work for naught.

Thank You



Steve Mello